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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

CONFIDENTIAL
Security Information

DATE: August 11, 1952

SUBJECT: Demarche by Greek Ambassador Requesting Consideration of Greek Participation in MEDO Planning Group.

PARTICIPANTS: Ambassador Athanase G. Politis
U - Mr. David K. Bruce
NEA - Mr. Alexander B. Daspit
GTI - Mr. Ben F. Dixon

COPIES TO:

U - Mr. Bruce	GTI
S/S	G
NEA	I/D for CIA
NE	Athens

1—1493

Action Required: Preparation of Reply to Greek Ambassador.

Action Assigned to: NEA

Discussion:

Ambassador Politis called today at 2:45 at his own request. He stated that the Greek Government was very much interested in recent press reports concerning the development of the Middel East Defense Organization. His Foreign Office had instructed him to express to the Department the Greek Govt's interest in becoming a member of the Middle East Planning Group. In doing so he wished to point out that Greece was a member of NATO, as was Turkey, and both countries had a real interest in Middle Eastern affairs. Turkey is already one of the sponsoring nations of MEDO and he believed it useful for Greece also to be a sponsoring nation. Greece maintains very close and friendly relations with Arab nations and it is believed that Greece could be most helpful in working out arrangements with these countries. Furthermore he pointed out that Cyprus was closely connected with the MEDO proposals and the Greeks naturally have a very special interest in Cyprus.

I told the Ambassador that his proposal caught me somewhat unawares. I did not realize that Greece wished to become a part of Middle Eastern security arrangements. If a threat to its security should arise it seemed to me more likely that it would come from the European area rather than the Middle East.

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Ambassador Politis said that if a "conflagration" should break out it would in all probability not be limited to a few nations but spread over the whole world. It is quite possible that troops would be needed in the Middle East and that Greece might be in a position to furnish them.

I pointed out that there might be some confusion as to the military and strategic concepts arising from membership in NATO. NATO is not concerned with the security problem of the Middle East. Furthermore, there might be considerable difficulties in the transfer of Greek troops to the Middle East should hostilities occur there. This might also result in leaving the Greek theater short of troops. I told him that I was not objecting to the idea of Greek participation in MEDO but that there seemed to be many complex problems incident to Greek participation which should first be resolved. I said that we were not prepared to give him an answer at this time. If it were decided to go ahead with this matter, it would of course be necessary to consult with other sponsoring nations, since the United States was only one of the seven sponsoring powers.

Ambassador Politis said that he was not informed as to what his Government's intentions might be with regard to the possibility of sending troops to the Middle East. However, he understood the new proposal would only provide for a planning organization. His Government believed the Greeks might usefully participate in these discussions irrespective of whether they would be able to send troops to the area. Mr. Dixon inquired as to whether the Greek Government would want to consider participation in Middle East security prior to the time the effects of Greek participation in NATO were known. Presumable considerable was yet to be done in the integration of Greek forces into European defense and it did not yet seem clear as to what demands might be made on Greek resources. The Ambassador replied that his Government was mainly interested in participating in the planning for MEDO and therefore did not forsee any difficulties ~~xixxxxxtxxpxxdxxxxxxxxxxxxxxrilyxxxxxidxxrxxxxkingxxxxxrixxxxxxx~~ xxxxxxxxxxxx. Mr. Daspit pointed out that Greece, near to the perimeter of the NATO theater as well as the MEDO theater, would naturally be interested in the coordination between MEDO and NATO. Close attention would be paid to the coordination of these aspects. Without question it was the intention of the sponsoring powers that problems affecting Greek interests would be the subject of coordination with the Greek Government.

I told the Ambassador that we would take his proposals under consideration and give him a reply as soon as possible.

NEA:GTH:EFDixon:lcm

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